Write or Call the White House

President Obama has declared his commitment to creating the most open and accessible administration in American history. That begins with taking comments and questions from you, the public, through our website.

Call the President

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Write a letter to the President

Here are a few simple things you can do to make sure your message gets to the White House as quickly as possible.

1. If possible, email us! This is the fastest way to get your message to President Obama.

2. If you write a letter, please consider typing it on an 8 1/2 by 11 inch sheet of paper. If you hand-write your letter, please consider using pen and writing as neatly as possible.

3. Please include your return address on your letter as well as your envelope. If you have an email address,
please consider including that as well.

4. And finally, be sure to include the full address of the White House to make sure your message gets to us as quickly and directly as possible:

The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Contents #1 (in reverse chron. order, bold type added by Dick)
(Some entries offer contexts.)

Petitions
July 13: Ellsberg, Why Snowden Had to Flee US
July 8/15: Schell, Hero Snowden vs. End of Privacy
July 5: Weisbrot, Helping Snowden
July 5: Pilger, Morales’ Plane Forced Down
June 26: Blum, Dark History of US NSS, vs. Phillip Agee
June 24: Lindorff, Hong Kong, China, Russia vs Hacker USA
June 19: Greenwald, FISA Fails Oversight
June 13: Greenwald, Snowden, Who Is He?

Contents #2
Snowden’s letter to German Chancellor Angela Merkel
Amy Goodman, Democracy Now: Snowden on Mass Surveillance
Snowden on Civil Rights
Ray McGovern: Snowden Wins Integrity Award
Risen and Poitras, NSA Gathers Social Connections
Rendall and McCloskey, Mainstream Media Misrepresents Muslims
Greenwald, US Hypocrisy Over Russian Amnesty for Snowden
Ridgeway and Casella, Torture
Oliver Stone, Obama and Snowden
Masters, Mainstream Media Labels Snowden a “Narcissist”

Contents #3  CHECK TOC WITH CONTENTS
PETITIONS from Roots Action
Today we're giving a major boost to a pair of petitions in support of NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden. Please add your name to one or both.

- **Click here to tell Secretary of State Kerry: Give Snowden back his passport!**
- **Click here to tell the Obama administration: Hands off Snowden!**

RootsAction is getting ready to publicly deliver these petitions to officials in Washington. The more signers, the greater the impact -- as we reach out to news media everywhere.

Truth must be told: Edward Snowden’s “crime” was to educate Americans and the world about the dangerous growth of the U.S. surveillance state.
Last summer -- after Snowden released documents on the NSA's mass surveillance programs -- the State Department suddenly revoked his passport in an effort to prevent him from reaching any country willing to grant political asylum.

Snowden didn't get the due process he deserves.

Freedom to travel requires a passport. It's a basic principle.

Tell Kerry to reinstate Edward Snowden's passport now.

But returning Snowden’s passport isn’t enough. The U.S. government should make an ironclad commitment to fully respect his legal rights to seek political asylum.

You can send a clear message that insists the U.S. government must not engage in any abduction or other foul play against Snowden. Your name can go on this petition right now: Mr. President, Hands Off Edward Snowden!

You can also help by forwarding this email to people you know who care about civil liberties.

Thank you!
- The RootsAction.org team

P.S. RootsAction is an independent online force endorsed by Jim Hightower, Barbara Ehrenreich, Cornel West, Daniel Ellsberg, Glenn Greenwald, Naomi Klein, Bill Fletcher Jr., Laura Flanders, former U.S. Senator James Abourezk, Coleen Rowley, Frances Fox Piven, and many others.

P.P.S. This work is only possible with your financial support. Please donate.

Background:
Reuters: U.S. Revokes Snowden's Passport
Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Washington Post: NSA Collects Millions of Address Books
Ray McGovern: Snowden Accepts Whistleblower Award

THE LEAKED DOCUMENTS

Hi Dick,
I thought you may like to have this on hand, all the Snowden leaked docs in one place. https://www.eff.org/nsa-spying/nsadocs

marc

Macaskill and Dance write: "When Edward Snowden met journalists in his cramped room in Hong Kong’s Mira hotel in June, his mission was ambitious. Amid the clutter of laundry, meal trays and his four laptops, he wanted to start a debate about mass surveillance."

LEAKER SNOWDEN

It's Not Only Privacy But Democracy That Snowden Has Tried to Help Us Save. Mark Weisbrot.

Posted: 01/10/2014 12:03 pm  [I read this in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette (1-11-14, 6B) under the title, “An American Hero.” --Dick]

Read more

Edward Snowden is a courageous American hero and will be remembered as one, long after the "war on terror" is replaced by some other pretext for violating Americans' constitutional rights and the rest of the world's national sovereignty and privacy, and sometimes security. He won his first major legal victory on December 16 when a Federal District Court ruled that the NSA's collection of Americans' phone records that Snowden first exposed was probably unconstitutional.

It's unfortunate that even most of the critical reporting on our national surveillance state still frames the abuses that Snowden revealed as a result of over-zealous efforts to protect Americans from terrorism. Even ignoring the industrial espionage and phone-tapping of foreign leaders like German Chancellor Angela Merkel or Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff that obviously had nothing to do with terrorism; the surveillance state at home is much more than a violation of our privacy.

Don’t get me wrong: That’s bad enough. Most people don’t want to share the intimate details of their personal lives with government snoops. But the Obama administration has managed to convince some of the more naïve among us that the NSA’s big data sweeps just sit in some huge storage facility that are sifted with algorithms to identify or investigate targets that may have something to do with terrorism.

However, there is a mountain of evidence that this massive data-gathering is in fact being used against citizens who are involved in constitutionally protected activity, such as political organizing and public education. The American Civil Liberties Union has a nice compilation of U.S. law
enforcement agencies "spying on American citizens and infiltrating or otherwise obstructing political activist groups" in 36 states in recent years. From spying on anti-war groups like Pittsburgh's Thomas Merton Center, to infiltrating groups across the country who were planning to protest at the 2004 Republican convention, our government has plenty of additional resources to use the NSA's data for discouraging and disrupting opposition political activity. In 2011, the Boston police, the federally-funded Boston Regional Intelligence Center, and the FBI were very busy tracking activists who were part of the Occupy movement, Code Pink, and Veterans for Peace. As a result they seem to have ignored the intelligence that was literally handed to them about the terrorists who bombed the Boston marathon in April. This tells you a lot about the priorities of our morally corrupt national surveillance state. "These programs were never about terrorism," wrote Snowden in a letter to Brazilians on December 17. "[T]hey're about economic spying, social control, and diplomatic manipulation. They're about power."

Back when Martin Luther King Jr. was inspiring millions in the struggle for civil and voting rights for African Americans, and for economic justice, the FBI was busy tapping his phone and harassing him. At one point they tried seriously to blackmail King into committing suicide, as the New York Times noted this week. Today they would have a constant flow of real-time information not only on his every move and phone call, but on every activist in that movement across the country. That is the difference that technology makes, if we let them get away with it. The surveillance state is also making the U.S. into a banana republic, as the burgeoning military-intelligence apparatus becomes more powerful relative to our elected officials, including the president. It was the wounded military-intelligence community's priorities that got the Obama administration to threaten China, Russia, and Latin America, and violate all sorts of international laws in a futile attempt to force their co-operation in capturing Snowden. And it is their power that is currently blocking reforms to rein in the NSA's abuses. It's not just your privacy that is under attack because of the abuses that Snowden exposed -- it's the foundations of a democratic society.

This was distributed by McClatchy-Tribune News Service on January 8, 2014 and published on January 9th by The Fresno Bee and other newspapers.

Mark Weisbrot
RSS Feed
GET UPDATES FROM MARK WEISBROT

Mark Weisbrot is co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington, D.C. He received his Ph.D. in economics from the University of Michigan. He is co-author, with Dean Baker, of Social Security: The Phony Crisis (University of Chicago Press, 2000), and has written numerous research papers on economic policy. He writes a column on economic and policy issues that is distributed to over 550 newspapers by McClatchy-Tribune Information Services. His opinion pieces have appeared in the Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times, the Boston
Globe, and most major U.S. newspapers. He appears regularly on national and local television and radio programs. He is also president of Just Foreign Policy.  Show full bio

04 December 13 PM Reader Supported News

Snowden and Greenwald: The Men Who Leaked the Secrets, Janet Reitman, Rolling Stone
Reitman writes: "In June...Edward Snowden, the mysterious source, would hand over many thousands of top-secret documents: a mother lode laying bare the architecture of the national-security state."
READ MORE

Snowden Appeals to US for Clemency on Leaks
Alison Smale, The New York Times 02 November 13 Reader Supported News
Smale reports: "Edward J. Snowden, the fugitive American security contractor granted temporary asylum by Russia, has appealed to Washington to stop treating him like a traitor for revealing that the United States has been eavesdropping on its allies, a German politician who met with Mr. Snowden said on Friday."
READ MORE

HELP SNOWDEN FIND ASYLUM
Thanks for taking action to find whistleblower Edward Snowden a safe home!
Dear friends,

The world’s greatest whistleblower is stuck in the Russian winter, facing solitary confinement, ridicule, and life in prison if US agents grab him. But this week, we could help get him to safety.

Edward Snowden exposed the mind-boggling and illegal level of surveillance the US government is conducting on, well, all of us. His welcome in Russia runs out soon, and he’s got nowhere to go. But Brazilian President Dilma is angry at US surveillance and experts say she might brave massive US pressure to consider asylum for Snowden!

This is about much more than one man. If Snowden’s act of truth-telling leads to crippling punishment, it sends the wrong signal to abusive governments and whistleblowers everywhere. If 1 million of us take action now, we can send President Dilma the largest citizen-supported asylum bid in history -- click below to safeguard Snowden and defend democracy everywhere:

http://www.avaaz.org/en/send_snowden_home_loc/?tpBkhab

Time is running out on Snowden’s one-year visa. Sharks are circling to drag him back to the US where he is unlikely to face a fair trial, but Brazil’s president Dilma hates mega spy program PRISM, has cancelled a state visit to the US over the issue, and is working to safeguard her people from spying. If she’s to support Snowden, Dilma needs to know she can withstand tough US pressure.

Opponents of giving Snowden asylum say he broke the law and put global security at risk. Some even call him a traitor, and say letting him get away with it could open the floodgates for others. But while Snowden did break the law — he did so to reveal a massive system of illegal global spying on an industrial scale. Snowden’s heroic action can make the world a better and safer place for everyone.

And Snowden isn’t just any whistleblower; his revelations have already changed the world for the better. Germany and Brazil have moved to reform privacy protections for citizens. The issue has been addressed openly in the United Nations, and a US court has ruled some forms of NSA spying are illegal. This week US President Obama is going to change the spy practices of the NSA, in reaction to Snowden’s leaks!

President Dilma needs our support to stand up to US pressure. Let’s show her that the world’s people will stand with Brazil if Brazil stands for bravery. Join the world’s biggest
asylum request ever, for Snowden:

http://www.avaaz.org/en/send_snowden_home_loc/?tpBkhab

With more than 30 million members around the world -- including 6 million in Brazil -- together we have already been key to protecting our internet from government gag laws. Now we can support the man who has sacrificed so much to protect us from a massive international spy scandal.

With hope and determination,

Joseph, Christoph, Michael, Sayeeda, Ricken and the whole Avaaz Team

MORE INFORMATION:

Edward Snowden, Whistle-Blower (NYTimes)
http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/02/opinion/edward-snowden-whistle-blower.html

Brazil urged to give Snowden asylum (Express)
http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/435646/Brazil-urged-to-give-Snowden-asylum

Brazil's Rousseff calls off state visit to U.S. over spying (Reuters)

Edward Snowden and the NSA files – timeline (The Guardian)

U.S. Spying Prompts UN Panel to Review Surveillance (Bloomberg)

Brazil confirms satellite deal after US spying outcry (The New Age)
http://thenewage.co.za/112997-1021-53-Brazil_confirms_satellite_deal_after_US_spying_outcry

Nine reasons you should care about NSA’s PRISM surveillance (PC Authority)

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Snowden to Join Board of the Freedom of the Press Foundation

By CHARLIE SAVAGE JAN. 14, 2014

WASHINGTON — Edward J. Snowden, the former National Security Agency contractor whose leaks of secret documents set off a national and global
debate about government spying, is joining the board of a nonprofit organization co-founded by Daniel Ellsberg, the well-known leaker of the Pentagon Papers during the Vietnam War.

The announcement by the group, the Freedom of the Press Foundation, is the latest contribution to a public relations tug of war between Mr. Snowden’s critics, who portray him as a criminal and a traitor, and his supporters, who say he is a whistle-blower and source for the news media in the tradition of Mr. Ellsberg.

The foundation’s board already includes two of the journalists Mr. Snowden gave N.S.A. documents to, Glenn Greenwald and Laura Poitras. But the organization — which consulted with lawyers about whether adding Mr. Snowden to its board could jeopardize its nonprofit tax status — is trying to emphasize parallels between Mr. Snowden and Mr. Ellsberg.

**RELATED COVERAGE AND CONTEXTS**

**Clarifying Snowden’s ‘Freedom’**

*By Ray McGovern, November 3, 2013*

A common angle from the mainstream U.S. media is that NSA leaker Edward Snowden will regret his asylum in Russia (rather than life in prison in the U.S.). A quote from ex-CIA analyst Ray McGovern was used in support of that theme, but he has asked the New York Times to clarify it.

By Ray McGovern (addressing the New York Times editors)
I was quoted in Steven Lee Myers’s “In Shadows, Hints of a Life and Even a Job for Snowden,” published by the New York Times on Oct. 31, as saying (about former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden), “He’s free, but not completely free” in asylum in Russia.

An unfortunate juxtaposition in the text of Mr. Myers’s piece has led several acquaintances to misinterpret my words. I trust you will agree that the issue is of some importance; thus, my request that you publish this clarification.

Mr. Myers quotes me correctly. Unfortunately, the immediately preceding sentences quote a Russian journalist, who “cautioned” that the appearance of a “happy, open asylum” could be “propaganda,” and that the Russian security services might be waiting to question Mr. Snowden until he becomes “increasingly dependent on them.”

This is not at all what I meant by “not completely free.” For starters, I guess I’m not sure how free you can feel being stateless, the State Department having revoked your passport.

Still more on this issue emerged on Oct. 9, after Mr. Snowden was presented with this year’s Sam Adams Associates Award for Integrity in Intelligence. We four Sam Adams Associates – Jesselyn Radack, Thomas Drake, Coleen Rowley, and I – chatted into the wee hours with Mr. Snowden and WikiLeaks journalist Ms. Sarah Harrison. (It was Ms. Harrison who facilitated his departure from Hong Kong on June 23. She has been at his side ever since to witness that he is not undergoing at the hands of the Russians what in some Western countries are called “enhanced interrogation techniques.”)

I asked Mr. Snowden whether he was aware that just six days before our Sam Adams award ceremony, Michael Hayden, former director of both the NSA and the CIA had said publicly that he had “thought of nominating Mr. Snowden … for a different list” – an unmistakable hint that Mr. Snowden be put on President Barack Obama’s infamous “Kill List.” With a wan smile, Mr. Snowden assured me that Yes; he keeps well up on such things.

And did he know that Mike Rogers, chair of the House Intelligence Committee, chimed right in with immediate support for Hayden’s suggestion, stating, “I can help you with that?” This time the wan smile gave way to a wince – and another Yes. (Both Hayden and Rogers were speaking at an Oct. 3 conference sponsored by the Washington Post, which, oddly, neglected to report on this macabre/mafia–type pas de deux.)

After the back-to-back wan smile and wince, I resisted the urge to ask Mr. Snowden if he saw reassurance in the official letter of July 23 from U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder to his Russian counterpart conveying Holder’s promise: “Mr. Snowden will not be tortured … if he returns to the
United States.”

In his Oct. 31 article, Mr. Myers includes an instructive remark from Anatoly Kucherena, a Russian lawyer assisting Mr. Snowden. Mr. Kucherena told Myers he would not discuss Mr. Snowden’s life in exile “because the level of threat from the U.S. government structures is still very high.”

THAT’S what I meant by “not completely free.”

Ray McGovern works for Tell the Word, a publishing arm of the ecumenical Church of the Saviour in inner-city Washington. Ray entered the CIA as an analyst on the same day as the late CIA analyst Sam Adams (a direct descendant of John Adams, by the way), and was instrumental in founding Sam Adams Associates for Integrity in Intelligence.

In 1971, the Nixon administration charged Mr. Ellsberg with violating the Espionage Act because he gave the Pentagon Papers, a classified history of decision-making about the Vietnam War, to The New York Times and other newspapers. A court eventually threw out the case for government misconduct. Mr. Snowden has been charged under that same law.

“He is no more of a traitor than I am, and I am not a traitor,” Mr. Ellsberg said in an interview. He added that he was proud that Mr. Snowden would serve alongside him on the group’s board, calling Mr. Snowden a hero who “has done more for our Constitution in terms of the Fourth and First Amendment” than anyone else Mr. Ellsberg knows.

The announcement comes days after the top Republican and
Democratic lawmakers on the House Intelligence Committee sought to paint a far more sinister portrait of Mr. Snowden, saying he had aligned himself with America’s enemies and jeopardized national security. They cited a classified defense intelligence report they said concluded that most of the documents he took concerned military activities rather than civil liberties.

“Make no mistake, Snowden is no patriot and there is no way to excuse the irreparable harm he caused to America and her allies, and continues to cause,” said the chairman, Representative Mike Rogers, Republican of Michigan. He added that Mr. Snowden’s “real acts of betrayal” were “likely to have lethal consequences for our troops in the field.”

Ben Wizner, an American Civil Liberties Union lawyer advising Mr. Snowden, called such criticism “exaggerated national security fears” that amounted to “an attack on the journalists who have published the stories based on the documents.” He added. “The government said much more dire things about what would happen if The New York Times published the Pentagon Papers. None of them turned out to be true.”

In a statement provided by the foundation, Mr. Snowden said he was honored to serve the cause of a free press “alongside extraordinary Americans like Daniel Ellsberg.”

Because Mr. Snowden is living in Russia, where he was granted temporary asylum, he will participate in board meetings by a remote link, according to the group’s director, Trevor Timm.

Mr. Timm said that before offering Mr. Snowden a position, the group consulted with lawyers about whether doing so could create legal problems. The Internal Revenue Service recently granted the group nonprofit status under a section of the tax code that allows donors to deduct contributions from their taxable income, he said.

The lawyers, he said, concluded that Mr. Snowden’s participation as a board member — an unpaid position — should not jeopardize that status because the I.R.S. has not penalized other groups with board members under indictment. Rather, such tax status is generally put at risk when groups stray from their mission.

Mr. Timm said that the foundation’s mission was to encourage “news organizations to publish government secrets in the public interest and for brave whistle-blowers to come forward, even though it is personally very risky.” He added: “Snowden embodies exactly what we started this organization for, so I think we’re pretty safe.”

The foundation was started 14 months ago for the initial purpose of enabling donations to WikiLeaks after firms like PayPal, MasterCard, and Visa began refusing to process contributions. It rapidly expanded into other activities, including raising funds for other organizations and hiring
a stenographer to produce daily transcripts of the court-martial trial of Chelsea Manning, then known as Pfc. Bradley Manning, WikiLeaks’ main source.

It raised about $650,000 last year, Mr. Timm said, of which about $500,000 went to various other organizations, including about $200,000 to WikiLeaks.

The group is increasingly focused on helping journalists protect the security of their communications, including by disseminating and managing a free software system to enable would-be sources to send leaked files to journalists in a way it says can evade surveillance.

“Journalism isn’t possible unless reporters and their sources can safely communicate, and where laws can’t protect that, technology can,” Mr. Snowden said in his statement. “This is a hard problem, but not an unsolvable one, and I look forward to using my experience to help find a solution.”

A version of this article appears in print on January 15, 2014, on page A16 of the New York edition with the headline: Snowden Joins Board of Press Group Founded by Daniel Ellsberg.

CONTEXTS

Pentagon & NSA Officials: Assassinate Edward Snowden,  By David Sirota, PandoDaily. RSN, 17 January 14

President Obama claims the right to extrajudicially execute American citizens, keeps a so-called "kill list," and has bragged he's "really good at killing people." This isn't bluster. Obama has backed this up with action, having killed U.S. citizens - including a 16-year-old boy – without charging, much less convicting, any of them with a single crime.

The implications are profound (and profoundly disturbing), and raise questions about Americans’ constitutional right to due process, the most basic constraints on presidential power, and our treatment of whistleblowers. Indeed, how can anyone expect those who witness executive-branch crimes to blow the whistle when the head of the executive branch asserts the right to instantly execute anyone he pleases at any time?

All of this may sound theoretical, academic, or even fantastical, straight out of a dystopian sci-fi flick. But it isn't. It is very real. After all, only a few months ago, the chairman of the U.S. House...
Intelligence Committee publicly offered to help extrajudicially assassinate NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden. And now, according to a harrowing new report that just hit the Internet, top NSA and Pentagon officials are doing much the same, even after court rulings and disclosures have concluded that Snowden is a whistleblower who exposed serious government crimes.

In an article headlined "America's Spies Want Edward Snowden Dead," Buzzfeed's Benny Johnson reports:

'In a world where I would not be restricted from killing an American, I personally would go and kill him myself,' a current NSA analyst told BuzzFeed. 'A lot of people share this sentiment.'

'I would love to put a bullet in his head,' one Pentagon official, a former special forces officer, said bluntly...

'His name is cursed every day over here,' a defense contractor told BuzzFeed, speaking from an overseas Intelligence collections base. 'Most everyone I talk to says he needs to be tried and hung, forget the trial and just hang him.'

One Army intelligence officer even offered BuzzFeed a chillingly detailed fantasy.

'I think if we had the chance, we would end it very quickly,' he said. 'Just casually walking on the streets of Moscow, coming back from buying his groceries. Going back to his flat and he is casually poked by a passerby. He thinks nothing of it at the time starts to feel a little woozy and thinks it's a parasite from the local water. He goes home very innocently and next thing you know he dies in the shower.'

Buzzfeed characterizes this as government officials merely "seething in very personal terms." However, with a top legislative branch leader offering to assist in the very extrajudicial assassination now being promoted by NSA and Pentagon officials, and with the executive branch categorically asserting the right to order such an extrajudicial assassination of a U.S. citizen, this is more than mere "seething." These are outright threats.

Think about it: As President Obama would no doubt acknowledge, the NSA and Pentagon are not independent agencies. As president he oversees and runs them. That is, they are overseen and run by the same Obama administration that has asserted the right to execute American citizens without indictment, trial or conviction. While these may just be officials speaking off the cuff, their language ("Most everyone I talk to"/"A lot of people share this sentiment") makes clear that their sentiment represents a pervasive culture throughout the government - again, the same government that not-so-coincidentally asserts the right to kill people in exactly the way they discuss.

It all leads back to that same harrowing question: how can Americans who witness executive-branch crimes feel comfortable or even physically safe blowing the whistle on said crimes?

The answer in the Obama era is: they can't.

Snowden to Ask for Russian Police Protection After U.S. Death Threats


Radyuhin reports: "Edward Snowden will ask Russian authorities for extra protection over
threats to his life from American military and intelligence officers.

GCHQ and European Spy Agencies Worked Together on Mass Surveillance. Julian Borger, Guardian UK 02 November 13 Reader
Supported News
Borger reports: "The German, French, Spanish and Swedish intelligence services have all developed methods of mass surveillance of internet and phone traffic over the past five years in close partnership with Britain’s GCHQ eavesdropping agency."

END SNOWDEN NEWSLETTER #3

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Dick Bennett

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